

123 My wife was almost entirely responsible for the natural history
126 collections and for a great deal of the topographical information.
As she had access to the women in the country she was able to
obtain much information from a source that is often left unexplored.
She kept a journal daily in which were recorded all the rough
notes made during the day. The journal amounted to 500 quarto
written pages. Khan Sahib Hasan Muhammad was likewise most
helpful in collecting information. He took down a great deal of the
tribal information and collected written memoranda from all and
sundry. He also recorded as far as possible the Arabic spellings
of places we passed. My wife has also had a large share in the
preparation of this report, and has been responsible for much of
the translation and collation of the material obtained. In addition
she has done the bulk of the typewriting.

000 I have also to thank Professor H. A. R. Gibb and Miss Freya
Stark for reading the historical chapters and making certain
suggestions.

Great care has been taken in an endeavour to ensure the spelling
of Arabic words in accordance with the method used officially,
which is generally known as the R.G.S. II system. The word
"Hadhramaut" is pronounced in the country "Hadhramoot";
ai and ei are pronounced as i and a in Kite and Kate respectively.

W.H.I.

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2. The Deluge and the Giants.

124 I proceed now to the narrative of Hadhramaut history as it
 126 is told and believed in the country. Unless otherwise stated, the
 narrative is as given verbally by local authorities and taken down
 [15] in writing at the time. The principal authority for the period
 from the disappearance of the 'Adites to modern times is Seiyid
 'Abdul Qadir, private secretary to the Qu'aiti Wazir.

73 "In the time of our Father Nuh," said a Du'an historian,
 "the whole of this land and of every land was covered with water."
 Nuh and his family built a big ship and lived in it while the flood
 lasted. When the waters subsided there were of course large
 rivers, and that is how the Wadis of the Hadhramaut were cut
 out, and that is why you find sea shells in them and on the Jöl."

"After the flood came the children of 'Ad, the first men to live in
 the Hadhramaut. They were great in stature, fifty cubits high.
 That was why they could use these great stones for building their
 houses. The tooth you have in your hand is the tooth of one of
 the sons of 'Ad, not of a sheep, as you thought." Thus said
 Muhammad the son of Seiyid Ahmed bin Hussein al 'Attas, the
 Mansab of Meshhed, as we stood among the ruins of Gheibun.

The children of 'Ad built towns and villages all over the
 Hadhramaut.² Some of them were big places and well built, and
 some of them were just rude dry stone shelters such as the Beduins
 build to-day.³

Nebi Allah Salih, peace be upon him, was a prophet of the people
 of 'Ad,⁴ and he died and was buried in the Wadi Khonab, and his
 son was Nebi Allah Hud, peace be upon him. And in his day the
 people of 'Ad did evil in the sight of Allah and they listened not
 to the warnings of the Prophet, and they were destroyed, except a
 few, and Allah received the Prophet and his grave is in the Wadi
 Maseila.

And the son of Nebi Allah Hud was Nebi Hudūn, and his grave
 is in the mosque of Hudūn in the Wadi Du'an. And there were
 other Nebis in the Hadhramaut, Mola Matar (whom some say is
 Seiyidna 'Ali bin 'Abitalib), and Molana Nebi Sodaf whose grave
 is in the Wadi Sodaf, and others.⁵

¹ Hadhramaut "history" begins with the Flood. The very nature of the Wadis makes it appear so vivid that it often seems quite a recent memory. The more scientific theory is, I believe, that the Wadis are due to the last Ice Age.

² If you wonder at the extent of their activities, reflect that 'Ad lived 1,200 years, had a thousand wives, and sired four thousand sons and daughters. Masudi, V, III, p. 80.

³ Any sign of human activity going beyond the knowledge of man is the work of the people of 'Ad. As Seiyid 'Abdul Qadir said to me, "the people of the interior attribute everything old to 'Ad and those of the coast to the Portuguese. Neither are right."

⁴ This is not of course the orthodox view. Salih preached to Thamud and is not generally believed to be the father of Hud.

⁵ The grave of the giant Mola Matar is not far from the KorSeiban. It, and the other giants' tombs, may have been sanctuaries of the old religion. Possibly Mola Matar was a rain-god. Sodaf may be Sadaf, the descendant, according to Arab genealogists, of Hadhramaut.

THE SOUTH-WEST BORDERLANDS OF THE RUB' AL KHALI

D. G. BUNKER

121 AS A RESULT of work carried out for the Desert Locust Survey in south-
126 A western Arabia during the past few years, several of the blanks on the map have been filled in and much confirmation has been given to previous travellers' reports. The region particularly investigated has been that which forms the transition belt from the peripheral mountain system to the interior sand desert often referred to as the Rub' al Khali. The area visited has been mapped on a scale of 1:500,000 by means of car-compass traverses tied to astronomically determined positions, all to a general accuracy of 0.1 of a mile. The following notes are intended only to supplement the information contained in those maps which are in process of publication.

The mountain systems

123 The old crystalline hills of the 'Asir and Yemen, which to the west drop in a series of steps to the Tihamah or coastal plain, are to the east overlain by near horizontal strata of sedimentary rocks of which the oldest are probably the sandstones forming the Kaukab plateau and the newest, excluding recent deposits, are the Eocene limestones of the *jol*, the succession seeming more complete in the north. The peripheral mountain system is in the form of a letter L, where the upright stroke comprises the 'Asir and the Yemen mountains and the horizontal stroke is the *jol* plateau, the division being more or less abrupt along the line of the forty-seventh meridian.

Philby (1938) describes the change between the two sides of the 'Asir watershed as "abruptly from a tropical country to a desert plateau of uniform height of over eight thousand feet (with higher ridges), descending to about six thousand feet at the western end of the Najran tract. It is a sandstone area with occasional cappings and peaks of basalt. Its rugged gorges and valleys have occasional wells and springs, but for the most part it is an abomination of desolation extending north-ward to Dhahran and south-ward to the limit of vision into the still unexplored territory of northern Yemen." Nevertheless there are among the eastern slopes many wadis whose seasonal floods may rush out of the mountainous regions to the inland plain and on into the sandy desert.

The regularity of these floods in the past may be deduced from the extent of the thick layers of silt which mark the sites of past damming and irrigation works in nearly all these wadis. These silt layers often form 20-foot cliffs containing the present watercourses, and occasionally the ruins of the dams themselves may be found. The Wadis Habauna and Najran, besides having silt cliffs, show signs of further re-cutting of their outwash plains. In both cases the outwash plain extends regularly for the first 10 miles from the foothills but during the next 5 miles is eroded by gullies some 3 feet deep which together form a plain at a lower level, only to be re-cut in the same manner.